



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

*Maryland's Social Services Agency*



### MEDIA RELEASE

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### **CHARLES COUNTY LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES HONORED FOR PROGRESS IN CHILD WELFARE**

**BALTIMORE** – Of all the 24 local social services departments serving Maryland children and families in need, the Charles County Department of Social Services did the best in reunifying potential foster children with their families.

At an awards ceremony earlier today, Maryland Department of Human Resources Secretary Brenda Donald honored Charles County Department of Social Services for increasing family reunifications by 75 since 2007.

In February of 2007, Donald introduced *Place Matters* - a statewide initiative to find permanent families for foster children, update social work practices and involve families in decisions affecting children in foster care.

In less than two years local departments have shown marked improvements in meeting adoption goals, reducing the number of children placed in group homes, increasing reunifications, reducing the number of children coming into foster care and increasing the number of children placed in family settings.

“Two and a half years ago, we launched *Place Matters* to reform child welfare in Maryland,” said Donald. “We take pride in the progress we’ve made to improve the lives of the vulnerable children and families we serve.”

Directors and other staff from the Charles County Department of Social Services will receive additional recognition from Governor Martin O’Malley during a reception to be held at the State House on Thursday, September 17, 2009.

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state’s social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also administers programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland’s fourth largest state agency.